

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0507

S E C R E T COTONOU 0335

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEVJ, AMGT, DM, US

SUBJ: US GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: OVERVIEW STATEMENT

REF: A. STATE 055496 B. 77 STATE 291277 CIXE 77 STATE 295560

1. FOLLOWING IS OVERVIEW STATEMENT REQUESTED IN CONNECTION
WITH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR BENIN AS DESCRIBED IN REF C:
OUR BASIC APPROACHES TOWARD FURTHERING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

LISTED FOR BENIN HAVE BEEN THROUGH (A) REGULAR DIPLOMATIC
CONTACTS WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY AT THE CHARGE LEVEL

CONTACT AT THE WORKING LEVEL ON SPECIFIC AID AND PEACE CORPS
PROJECTS, BOTH EXISTING AND PROJECTED; (C) EXPANDED EXCHANGE
AND
PLACING PROGRAMS UNDER THE AEGIS OF AID AND USIS; AND
(D) CONTINUING USIS ENGLISH COURSES AND CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS,
AS WELL AS A REGULAR TEACHING PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
BENIN.

2. WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT TO MEASURE PROGRESS WHEN DEALING
WITH AN ALREADY LUMBERING BUREAUCRACY WHICH IS FURTHER
UNENCUMBERED BY POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS, WE
HAVE NONETHELESS SUCCEEDED IN MAINTAINING A DIALOGUE WITH THE
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GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN (LTDB) TO KEEP THEM
AWARE OF OUR SPECIFIC CONCERNS. AS A RESULT WE HAVE REGISTERED

SOME PROGRESS IN GETTING THE GPRB TO AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO

COMPENSATE THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES FOR PROPERTY SEIZED
IN 1976. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN KEEPING THE

GPRB AWARE OF OUR CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. IN RECENT MEETINGS WITH SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS ON THE BENEFIT IMPRISONMENT CASE, BENINESE MADE POINT OF STRESSING THAT THIS WAS NOT AN

ARBITRARY ARREST SUCH AS THOSE WHICH HAD TRIGGERED HUU: RIGHTS CONCERNS IN EARLY 1977. WE HAVE ALSO KEPT THE GPRB'S ATTENTION FOCUSED ON BENNETT CASE TO THE EXTENT THAT BENNETT WAS TRANSFERRED FROM PRISON TO THE HOSPITAL.

3. IMPRESSIONS GAINED FROM OUR CONTACTS WITH GPRB OFFICIALS INDICATE THAT THE BENINESE ARE GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH THE COURSE OF U.S.-BENIN RELATIONS. THE DIRECTOR OF NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY RECENTLY STATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S SATISFACTION WITH BILATERAL RELATIONS AND SPECIFICALLY

STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ADVANCED MASTERS AND THE TRAINING BEING OFFERED THROUGH AID AND THE AFRO-AMERICAN INSTITUTE. THE GPRB VIEWS THE AWARDED OF THESE GRANTS AS A MAJOR STEP

FORWARD IN BENINESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

4. WHILE WE DO NOT EXPECT TO MAKE DRAMATIC PROGRESS IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH A GOVERNMENT WHICH IS IDEOLOGICALLY HOSTILE TO WESTERN VALUES, WE BELIEVE THAT AS THE APPROACHES CITED ABOVE ARE GRADUALLY MOVING US CLOSER TO SOME OF THE SECRET

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MORE SPECIFIC GOALS SET FORTH IN REF C, WE SHOULD CONTINUE OUR COURSES OF ACTION. THOMPSON

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